

ARMSTRONG-ROGERS ARCHAEOLOGY SITE

Site 7NC-F-135



Archaeological resources on the Armstrong-Rogers site span centuries of history. Artifacts indicate a Native American occupation prior to colonial settlement. Alexander Armstrong purchased the property in 1739, as part of a larger 312-acre tract. Artifacts recovered by archaeologists suggest that the family's occupation of the site began in 1780. The property stayed in the Armstrong family until 1824 when it was purchased by James Rogers, who owned the site until 1849.

Archaeologists have been hard at work determining the Native American and historic use of this property. Archaeology, the study of human activity in the past, allows us to better understand the people that settled a certain area, their activities, farm methods, and use of the land. In the case of the Armstrong-Rogers site, archaeologists will gain a better understanding of Delaware family farmers including diet, consumer habits, site layout and architecture.



Archaeologist at work



Armstrong-Rogers Site, 7NC-F-135

Why do Archaeology? Why this site in particular? The Armstrong-Rogers site is a component of a larger project. Investigation of the site grew out of the planned expansion of U.S. Route 301, an effort by the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) to better manage truck traffic and reduce congestion. When undertaking a project like this with Federal funding, planners are required under Federal law (Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act) to identify and evaluate any archaeological and historic sites the project may affect. Dovetail Cultural Resource Group, located in Fredericksburg, Virginia, was contracted to conduct

a full-scale archaeological investigation (dig) designed to document the site through excavation using archaeology to gain a better understanding of the Native American and historic uses of the land. Work at this level is referred to as a Phase III data recovery project and occurs after Phase I and Phase II survey and evaluation. Phase III work occurs on sites that cannot be avoided during construction to assure that all data is retrieved before a project commences. The study involves extensive archival research, open excavations, artifact and architectural analysis, and sampling of area soils to locate tiny remains, such as seeds and fish scales.



Stone House Foundation

Archaeologists encountered a fieldstone and brick foundation, most likely the remains of a house built in the period from 1770–1820. The location of this structure is puzzling to Archaeologists. Built on low-lying ground close to a stream, the house would have been in danger of flooding during the rainy season. Further investigation will tell us more about the architecture and layout of the structure, possibly answering the question as to why the occupant decided to build in this location.



Stone House Foundation



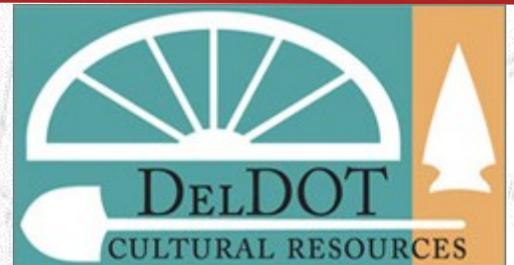
Slipware fragments, 1670–1850

More than 2,900 domestic artifacts have already been recovered, including many more still to be found. Archaeologists will analyze these artifacts, along with the architectural materials recovered, to better understand the people that occupied this area.

In an effort to engage the public, archaeologists will record much of the archaeological process using photography, journals, and video. Updates and blog posts can be found online at the DelDOT blog located at <http://blogs.deldot.gov/category/us301/archaeology-updates/>. For additional information on tours, please contact Sara Poore, spoore@dovetailcrg.com, or 540-899-9170.



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